

*Senator Hallauer's district was so altered by the 1965 redistricting that he chose not to run again in 1968. Here he comments on his recollections of the pivotal 1965 session. Read the entire text of [Wilbur G. Hallauer: An Oral History](#) on the Oral History Program's Web site.*

**Thomas Kerr:** The redistricting issue spilled over into the 1965 legislative session, at which time it was at least partially resolved. Your own Senate district was very much affected by all that, and it would be most interesting to hear your own memories of that session.

**Senator Hallauer:** Well, in 1965 we knew we had the redistricting gun against our head. Essentially, we had only so much time to do it in, and nothing else was supposed to happen—although, of course, people talked about the other things anyway. The main activity was carried on by Representative Gorton and Senator Greive, and the war rooms were at full output, with maps by the billions it seemed. Everybody was taken in for personal interviews to try and line them up for the appropriate side. A legislator would go through the Gorton shop and be informed about what was intended for him there and what could be done to him. He would then receive like treatment from Senator Greive in his shop. I didn't see much point in going through it more than once. I did it to see where they stood, but everybody was involved in this and the problem was to come up with a compromise that would be supported by a majority.



Wilbur Hallauer

Here in central Washington there were five senatorial seats, all held by Democrats: Jerry Hanna, Nat Washington, Mike McCormack, Dan Jolly, and myself. The problem was that there simply was not enough population in the area to justify five seats. So, in order to meet the reapportionment norms established by the Federal Court, one of the districts would have to disappear. There would also have to be adjustments in Al Henry's district along the Columbia River in Klickitat, Skamania, and Clark counties. He was also a Democrat. So the upshot of it was that one of us had to go.

After this thing had been quarreled over for long time, McCormack, Hanna, Washington, and I essentially stood together on it. As we got near to the final resolution of it, I lined up with Representative Gorton and Senator McCormack and we pretty well maintained a common front on it. But we knew that somebody was going to get hurt. One of the proposals, for example, was to put Kittitas County in with Chelan County and Senator Hanna would have the primary shot there. Senator Washington's district would then have had to extend down into Franklin County in order to get his necessary quota of voters.

Anyway, none of the alternatives was very good. It was like playing roulette, Russian roulette, with your friends and nobody would enjoy a scenario of that kind. I

finally decided that instead of all of the plotting and counter-plotting that was going in the Gorton and Greive camps, maybe the best thing for me to do would be to change my status, whereby I would step back and allow my District One, Okanogan and Douglas counties, to be changed so that Douglas County could be joined with Chelan County. That would leave Senator Washington with Kittitas and Grant counties. Those arrangements would stand the test of numbers pretty well. At the same time, Senator Henry's problem could be solved by moving him further westward into Clark County and Senator McCormack's Tri-Cities area could be adjusted in such a way that could be taken care of, too. My District One could be combined with District Two in such a way as to include Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties. District Two had been represented by Senator McMillan, an ally of Greive.

But if I were to do that, I wanted a fair shot to meet McMillan in a head-to-head election that would allow the voters to choose which of us they wanted to represent them. But the problem was that the senator from District One was elected in the presidential year, while the senator from District Two was elected in the off-year. I had just been reelected in 1964. So what I finally proposed to my own caucus in the state Senate was this: conduct an election in 1966 in District Two, which would include Okanogan County. I could run in it if I wanted to, or not if I wanted to. My four-year term would be honored, since I had just been elected to it. District One could be moved from eastern Washington to western Washington and, in 1968, there would be another election of a senator after a two-year term by whoever was elected in 1966.

I had studied the state constitution pretty closely about whether this could be done or not. It required that half the senators be elected in one state election year, and the other half elected in the alternative year. Well, it happened that twenty-five senators had been elected in 1964, as I recall, and we were simply proposing to change that, so that twenty-five would be elected in 1966, and twenty-four in the presidential year of 1968.

Well, when I proposed it in caucus I got an immediate response from Greive and he consulted right there in the caucus with a half dozen of his people, including Senator McMillan. They asked for a recess of fifteen or twenty minutes and said they would be back to discuss it further. They came back and said they would accept my proposal. So I really think that was where we broke the redistricting deadlock as far as the Senate was concerned. I think it was acceptable as far as Gorton was concerned, although I think he much preferred to have me representing the district than Mr. McMillan. But that was something else again.

**Mr. Kerr:** So, you would be representing District One, which is now is located in western Washington?

**Sen. Hallauer:** Yes, and, as a matter of fact, late in that 1965 session, the good folks from up in Kenmore and Bothell came down and they had a helicopter and gave me a ride from Olympia up over the district. It took us only about ten minutes to cover the district, whereas, in the old District One, to cover it with a helicopter would have been quite an adventure! They were nice folks and I tried to represent them as well as I could. I'd been imposed upon them, and they knew it was part of a deal to bring representation to their area. I never seriously considered the idea of moving over there and becoming their senator. I'm an Eastern Washingtonian, I'm afraid.

**Mr. Kerr:** But you did represent them for the last two years?

**Sen. Hallauer:** Well, I also represented Okanogan and Douglas counties for the same two years.

**Mr. Kerr:** Well, how did that work out for that two-year period, representing two such completely different areas as rural Okanogan and suburban Bothell?

**Sen. Hallauer:** People came to me from both areas to talk about the issues and their respective problems. I didn't mind that at all. I'd always been active in things like municipal legislation. I think there were fourteen towns that qualified as municipalities in District One. The municipalities in western Washington were bigger and, of course, there were many more of them.

**Mr. Kerr:** And, of course, you had long had major business interests on the west side of the mountains anyway and felt quite comfortable there?

**Sen. Hallauer:** Yes, that's true. I'd been involved in business over there for many years.

**Mr. Kerr:** But, in any event, you feel that your proposal broke the redistricting deadlock, or at least as far as the Senate is concerned?

**Sen. Hallauer:** I feel that it did. Whether other people would view it the same way or not, I don't know. But I think it was important in changing the complexion of the problem because it took the pressure off McCormack, Hanna and Washington, and maybe even Henry to some extent.

**Mr. Kerr:** Do you recall whether there were deadlocks affecting other Senate districts?

**Sen. Hallauer:** There were a number of very difficult problems and, as I remember, the redistricting measure received a bare majority for passage.

**Mr. Kerr:** But you feel that resolving the District One problem was a critical step in the redistricting process?

**Sen. Hallauer:** I think that it was a key. It would be interesting to know about how Bob Greive thinks about it. In late February of 1999, I ran into him at the Old Timers dinner in Olympia. He was coming in when I was going out and we talked about his book. Have you read it?

**Mr. Kerr:** Yes. It's a good campaign guide.

**Sen. Hallauer:** So anyway, we talked about his book mostly. I wouldn't mind sitting down with Bob. He's fairly easy to talk to. He never changes his mind about anything. Probably he would say the same thing for me.

**Mr. Kerr:** Well, in looking back on the redistricting issue, with the benefit of a quarter century of hindsight, do you feel that this is an activity that properly belongs to a legislative body?

**Sen. Hallauer:** No, I don't. The analogy that was commonly expressed in caucus and off the floor was that of a doctor operating on his own hemorrhoids.

**Mr. Kerr:** An intriguing image!

As you know, efforts were made during the 1960s to try to create what some people called "little federal systems" in the states, whereby House districts would represent people and Senate districts would, in effect, represent territory. Such schemes were eventually found to be unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. But was that ever seriously talked about in the Washington State Legislature?

**Sen. Hallauer:** Some people felt that if such a scheme was legitimate at the federal level, it should also be legitimate at the state level. My friend, Bill Gissberg, was very, very high on the idea of a little federal parallel, but I never thought it was realistic. You'd have to change the U.S. Constitution to do it, and I don't think that would be politically feasible for that kind of purpose. I never subscribed to it and I had a hard time understanding my friends who did.



*Senator Hallauer reading a bill on the senate floor in 1965.*